

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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P 061929Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7696
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
WHITEHOUSE WASHDC
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USICA WASHDC

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS SENATOR BYRD'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR MPOL US ENGR BE
SUBJECT: SENATOR BYRD'S VISIT TO BELGIUM: MEDIA REACTION

1. SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD'S JULY 3-4 VISIT TO BRUSSELS
AND THE PRESS CONFERENCES HE GAVE FOLLOWING HIS DAY OF
TALKS AT NATO AND SHAPE AND AFTER HIS MEETING LATER WITH
PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS WERE COVERED IN FOUR BELGIAN
NEWSPAPERS AND BY THE BELGIAN NEWS AGENCY BELGA.

2. LE SOIR, BRUSSELS' MAJOR FRENCH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER,
DEVOTED THE MOST SPACE TO THE STORY. IN ITS JULY 4
EDITION THE NEWSPAPER DESCRIBED SENATOR BYRD AS THE FOURTH
MOST INFLUENTIAL AMERICAN ACCORDING TO A U.S NEWS AND
WORLD REPORT POLL. IT SAID HE WAS OFTEN CONSULTED BY
PRESIDENT CARTER AND IT STRESSED THE IMPORTANT ROLE PLAYED
BY THE U.S. SENATE IN FOREIGN POLICY. DRAWING HEAVILY
FROM THE SENATOR'S JULY 3 PRESS CONFERENCE, ATTENDED BY
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SOME 20 BELGIAN NEWSMEN AND CORRESPONDENTS OF OTHER
EUROPEAN MEDIA, THE ARTICLE SAID: "WHAT ARE THE TOPICS
LIKELY TO BE DISCUSSED WITH A POWERFUL U.S. SENATOR WHO
DINES FROM TIME TO TIME AT THE WHITE HOUSE, WHO ADVISES
THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND RECEIVES FROM HIM CONSIDERABLE
CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION. OF COURSE, THE NEUTRON BOMB,
THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON FORCE REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE AND

THE NOTORIOUS SALT TALKS WHICH AIM AT LIMITING NUCLEAR WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. ALL THESE QUESTIONS, ACCORDING TO THE SENATOR, CAN ONLY BE DISCUSSED FROM ONE VANTAGE POINT: THAT OF THE SECURITY OF THE U.S. AND OF ITS EUROPEAN

ALLIES. FOR INSTANCE, ABOUT SALT, THE SENATOR LIKES TO EXPLAIN THAT THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH WILL EXERCISE ITS FULL PREROGATIVES. EVERY SENTENCE, EVERY WORD OF THE TREATY THAT WASHINGTON WILL HAVE NEGOTIATED WITH MOSCOW WILL BE SCRUTINIZED. IT IS USELESS TO APPROVE SIMPLE BITS OF PAPER. THE SENATORS WILL CONSIDER, CRITICIZE AND POSSIBLY APPROVE STRICTLY ACCORDING TO SECURITY REQUIREMENTS. IT IS THE SENATE WHICH WILL HAVE THE LAST SAY WHEN THE TIME WILL HAVE COME TO LIMIT STRATEGIC ARMS." TURNING TO THE STATUS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM LE SOIR QUOTES SENATOR BYRD INDIRECTLY AS SAYING "IT IS A BIG PACKAGE AND IT IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT REFORMS ARE SOUGHT IN THIS FIELD. BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT BEFORE THE YEAR'S END, THE BILL WILL BE ON THE PRESIDENT'S DESK READY FOR HIS SIGNATURE."

THE ARTICLE CONTINUES: "IS THE SUSPENSION OF THE DECISION ON THE NEUTRON BOMB COMPATIBLE WITH AN EFFECTIVE DEFENSE OF EUROPE? THE N-BOMB IS IN NO WAY ABANDONED. ITS PRODUCTION IS NOT STOPPED. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ONLY TAKEN TIME FOR REFLECTION WHILE WAITING FOR A SOVIET CONCESSION. UNCLASSIFIED

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PERSONALLY, I AM IN FAVOR OF THE PRODUCTION OF THIS WEAPON. THE BEST DETERRENCE AGAINST ANY ATTACK, SENATOR BYRD THINKS IN THIS RESPECT, IS A STRONG DEFENSE. CERTAIN PROBLEMS THAT THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE IS FACING, SUCH AS THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO IMPOSED ON TURKEY OR THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON ARMS REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE MUST BE CONSIDERED ACCORDING TO THE SAME PRINCIPLE. OUR SECURITY "AND THAT OF OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES CAREFULLY UNDERLINES ROBERT C. BYRD. PRESIDENT CARTER IS IN FAVOR OF LIFTING THE EMBARGO, REMARKS A TURKISH JOURNALIST, BUT VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, WHO REPORTEDLY IS FAVORING THE GREEK LOBBY, DOES NOT SEEM TO SUPPORT HIS CHIEF VERY STRONGLY. SUPERB IN HIS GREY SUIT, WITH HIS SILVER HAIR ARTISTICALLY COMBED AND THE APPEARANCE OF THINKING DEEPLY BEFORE EACH ANSWER, SENATOR BYRD OF WEST VIRGINIA... ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL MEN IN WASHINGTON, UTTERS THIS HISTORIC SENTENCE....: 'MR. MONDALE SUPPORTS THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY. HE CONDUCTS THE SAME POLICY. NO IFS; NO BUTS; NO MAYBES; NO YES BUTS; NO PROBABLYS.' THAT IS IT. CLEAR AND WITHOUT PROBLEMS..."

3. TWO DUTCH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS, MASS CIRCULATION HET VOLK AND SOCIALIST VOORUIT ON JULY 5 AND BRUSSELS' SECOND

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MOST IMPORTANT FRENCH-LANGUAGE DAILY LA LIBRE BELGIQUE,
JULY 6, CARRIED MORE OR LESS FULL VERSIONS OF THE REPORT
OF SENATOR BYRD'S TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS SENT
OUT BY BELGA, TEXT OF WHICH FOLLOWS.
"TUESDAY EVENING PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS RECEIVED U.S.
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER ROBERT C. BYRD. THE SENATOR IS
CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING A TOUR OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE
COUNTRIES AS A SPECIAL EMISSARY OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT.
HIS MISSION, ROBERT BYRD SAID IN AN INFORMAL MEETING WITH
THE PRESS FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH THE BELGIAN PRIME
MINISTER, IS TO PLEDGE TO THE NATO COUNTRIES U.S. SUPPORT
FOR THE LONG-TERM DEFENSE PLAN (LTDP). REFERRING TO THE
SOVIET UNION'S INCREASING ARMS BUILDUP, SENATOR BYRD SAID
THE BEST DETERRENT WAS TO CARRY THROUGH LTDP. HE FEELS
THAT ALL NATO COUNTRIES SHOULD CARRY THROUGH THEIR ANNUAL
3 PER CENT INCREASE OF DEFENSE EXPENDITURES. THIS IS
BASICALLY THE MESSAGE WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ASKED ME
TO CONVEY, THE SENATOR SAID. HE ADDED THAT THE ATLANTIC
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ALLIES WILL BE INFORMED AND CONSULTED ABOUT THE SCOPE OF A POSSIBLE SALT II TREATY. ON ANOTHER POINT, SENATOR BYRD POINTED OUT THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS IS VIRTUALLY READY WITH AN OVERALL ENERGY BILL. THIS BILL WILL REINFORCE THE POSITION OF THE AMERICAN DOLLAR AND IS MOREOVER NECESSARY TO THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES, HE ADDED. WITH REGARDS TO AWACS (ADVANCED WARNING AIR CONTROL SYSTEM) SENATOR BYRD SAID HE HAD MADE KNOWN TO THE BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER THE SENTIMENT OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT, U.S. CONGRESS AND NATO, NAMELY THAT BELGIUM SHOULD ASSUME ITS SHARE IN THE PROCUREMENT COSTS. ACCORDING TO BYRD, MR. TINDEMANS ANSWERED THAT THE MATTER IS STILL UNDER DISCUSSION BUT THAT NO FINAL DECISION HAS YET BEEN MADE IN THIS REGARD." CHAMBERS

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